

John W. Negus Company

Casters, wheels, furniture glides, hand trucks, carts, dollies and more.

August 20, 2016

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OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

U.S. EPA
ATTN: Harbor Comments
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

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EPA-REGION 10

I am the President of the John W. Negus Company. My company has been a pretty longstanding business in Portland as we've been in business in the same location since 1950. Basically, we are distributors of warehouse type equipment such as dollies, casters, and so forth for various applications. We carry out our business not only locally, but we also deal nationwide. My business is approximately 2 to 3 miles from the Willamette River, so the proposal the EPA has set forth to clean the river is very concerning to me.

The EPA has proposed to dredge the entire river to clean up the contamination to the tune of one billion dollars. It's pretty evident that we have bigger issues that money could be used for. That kind of money would go a long way in improving our infrastructure. Our regular infrastructure, such as bridges and roads, are crumbling around us. I would think there would be better potential for monetary spending than dredging the river, especially when that could end up causing more harm than good.

In order to fund the cleanup, we can expect our taxes and utility bills to increase. This would have a big impact on the businesses, especially small businesses such as mine. Anything that tends to start getting out of control, whether it's taxes or utilities, it affects the bottom line. Many businesses in the area still haven't come back that great from the downturn of 2009. I hate to see costs increase, but realistically prices will go up. However, when they start talking about these major increases it's very difficult to try to absorb those.

One of the benefits of living in Portland is having access to the river. Recently, I purchased a boat and have been going down the Willamette River. When you're on the river, it gives you a different point of view. It's a great area for boating as it's nice and deep and pretty wide. In my experiences going through the river, I often see many other pleasure boaters or commercial traffic. While I'm not sure what the degree of disruption would be for such a big scale operation, I do know it would be detrimental to the area. I don't know what the procedure would entail, whether the contaminated particles would be driven or boated out. Either way, I'm sure it would put a hurt on both businesses in the area as well as those who partake in recreational activities on the river.

If there's a safer and less expensive way of cleaning the river, then I'm all for that. The new data should certainly be taken into account and all potential opportunities and methods should be examined before a project like this is taken on. It's better to follow the procedures and recommendations of the Army Corps of Engineers. They do a lot of stuff here locally, so they in many ways have better knowledge when it comes to working with contaminants in the river. Therefore, I urge you to find a less invasive and less costly method to clean the river that would not have such a negative impact on the businesses and residents of Portland.

Sincerely,

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President

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Portland, OR 97232